

REMARKS

In the Office Action under reply, the Examiner required an election of species, which he identified as Species 1, directed to drawing Fig. 11, and Species 2, directed to Fig. 20. The claims of this application read on the respective species as follows:

Species 1: claims 1-11, 19-29, 37-47 and 55-65;

Species 2: claims 12-18, 30-36, 48-54 and 66-72.

New claim 73 is submitted by this amendment. Claim 73 is generic to both species and reads on species 1 as well as on species 2.

Claims 17, 32 and 68 are amended to correct obvious inadvertent errors.

Applicants elect, **with traverse**, Species 1 claims 1-11, 19-29, 37-47 and 55-65, for further prosecution in the present application. Claim 73 is generic. Accordingly, if this generic claim is found allowable, it is appreciated the instant requirement for an election of species will be withdrawn and all claims which include the limitations of the allowable generic claim likewise will be allowed.

It is submitted that a search for the invention defined by the claims of Species 1 will require a search that encompasses the claims of Species 2 and, thus, the claims covering both species will be searched. If the present requirement for an election of species is maintained, the logical result will be the filing of yet another divisional application to include the claims that read on the non-elected species. Of course, this will mean that the examination of such claims will be delayed. However, since the search for the claims included in that divisional application will overlap with and, in all probability, be identical to the search that is to be conducted on the Species 1 claims elected herein, the primary effort needed to examine all applications will be repeated. Furthermore, it is likely that the same Examiner will be in charge of the divisional

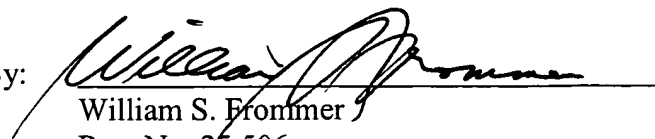
application; but in light of the delay between the prosecution of the present application and that of the divisional application, the Examiner will have to conduct a duplicate, redundant search at a later time. Alternatively, if a different Examiner is assigned to the divisional application, a significant loss of PTO efficiency will result in his examination of that divisional case. After all, the present Examiner will be the individual in the best position to examine both applications and he will be fully familiar with the subject matter of that divisional application.

Therefore, since the only logical outcome of the present requirement for an election of species would be to delay the examination of the claims that read on Species 2, resulting in inefficiencies on the part of the Office and unnecessary expenditures by applicants, and since a single search can be done for all claims without any significant burden on the Office, it is respectfully requested that this requirement for an election of species be withdrawn.

Applicants reserve their right to file a divisional application to the claims of Species 2, if necessary, so as to proceed with the examination of the non-elected claims.

An early examination on the merits of the claims of this application are respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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